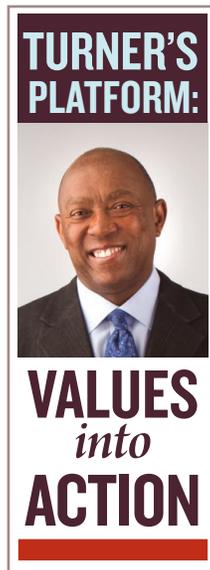


PARTNERS IN SAFETY

Sylvester Turner's plan to keep Houston safe by expanding community policing, adding new police officers and improving transparency and accountability.

Safety is a partnership. The women and men of the Houston Police Department who risk their lives every day to keep us safe benefit when our residents are aware, engaged and working in concert to provide safe streets and neighborhoods. Our residents benefit when police officers are well-trained, well-equipped and have a deep understanding of the communities in which they operate. Everyone benefits when rules are clear, decision-making is transparent and communication is robust. And it all depends on mutual respect and trust.

Ensuring effective, transparent policing is one of the City of Houston's most important responsibilities. As mayor, I will work to put in place a strong community-policing model that forges real connections between officers and the communities they serve. To make that model work — to ensure that officers are meaningfully engaged in the neighborhoods they serve — I will commit to a substantial increase in the number of officers on the streets. I will also work to increase transparency in police interactions and build trust between police and Houstonians by fully funding and effectively implementing the body camera program that has long been proposed for our city. Step one toward

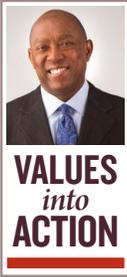


accomplishing these necessary changes is securing the resources we need. Like cities across the country, Houston is facing a tough budget climate. We must be open to exploring alternative sources of revenue for these critical public safety improvements. That is why, finally, I will work to build voter support for lifting the revenue cap for the limited purpose of public safety initiatives.

I call it Partners in Safety: nurturing trust between our police and our neighborhoods, ensuring our police department has the resources it needs to employ the community policing techniques that we know are effective, and increasing police accountability and police safety by implementing proven, commonsense solutions.

My *Partners in Safety* program will:

- **Increase the number of HPD officers to 6,000 by 2020.** Our police department is severely understaffed, with personnel numbers close to what they were a decade ago, despite Houston's substantial population growth. I will fight to ensure we have enough officers to meet the needs of today's Houston.
- **Implement a strong community-policing model to increase public trust and improve HPD's overall effectiveness.** By prioritizing our resources, we can



implement the community-oriented solutions that improve our overall safety by allowing meaningful engagement between the police and the communities they serve.

■ **Fully fund and effectively implement the pending body camera program to ensure transparency in police**

interactions with the public. Use of body cameras, meant to increase transparency in law enforcement interactions, has long languished in Houston for lack of resources. As mayor, I will work with HPD and neighborhoods to ensure that body cameras are being implemented fairly and effectively.

■ **Build voter support for lifting the revenue cap for the specific purpose of increasing our officer pool to 6,000.**

Protecting the safety of our residents is among the most important priorities of city government. We must dedicate the resources necessary to ensure effective staffing and police engagement. I will work to build a voter consensus for lifting the revenue cap for the limited public safety purpose of eliminating HPD's chronic understaffing.

Increase the number of HPD officers to 6,000 by 2020.

Chronic understaffing is hampering HPD's ability to protect our communities, and the challenge will only grow worse in the coming years. Despite Houston's immense population growth over the last decade, our police force has remained roughly the same size. Houstonians deserve better. Effective community policing requires a sufficient number of officers to make the model work — when officers are stretched too thin because they are responding to emergency calls or isolated in their cars on patrols, they do not have the ability to engage with the neighborhoods they serve. We need a well-staffed department to effect the community engagement

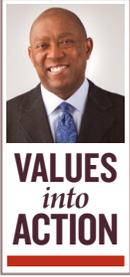
techniques that will make our city safer and improve relationships between officers and the public.

A comprehensive study of HPD released last year supports the conclusion that, with an officer corps of approximately 5,300, additional officers are needed.¹ Because of understaffing, HPD is unable even to investigate many reported crimes², let alone fully engage with Houston's geographically spread and culturally diverse communities.



“REDUCING SOCIAL DISTANCE BETWEEN POLICE AND OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IS A LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR SAFER NEIGHBORHOODS AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES.”

In response to chronic understaffing, HPD Chief Charles McClelland has proposed a staff growth proposal that, through a combination of reassignment, additional overtime and accelerated hiring, will result in approximately 1200 new equivalent officers over ten years.³ Central to the proposal is the addition of 540 new officer hires over the next five years by increasing the number of cadet classes moving through training from



two classes to three classes annually. As mayor, I will fight to increase HPD staff to 6,000 equivalent officers by 2020 so that our police department has the resources they need to keep us safe.

Implement a strong community-policing model to increase public trust and improve HPD’s overall effectiveness.

Community policing is a simple but powerful idea: encouraging active engagement between police and local communities makes communities safer. Community policing has long been proven to reduce crime and improve residents’ feelings about their neighborhoods.⁴ Key community policing components like collaborative partnerships between police and neighborhood organizations, decentralization of police offices, and proactive problem solving have been shown to increase trust between police and the public and decrease crime. HPD already embraces a community policing philosophy that shows in some of its most successful programs — from their groundbreaking Homeless Outreach Team to their Positive Interaction Program to a commitment to diversity

in hiring. However, there is more to be done to make HPD as transparent and connected to our communities as possible. As mayor, I will work with HPD to implement the following:

■ **CULTURAL TRAINING.** Houston is the most diverse city in the country. That diversity is one of our great strengths, but it also means that our city leadership needs to be able to take into account the particular needs of various communities. I have heard safety concerns from members of our LGBT community in the wake of multiple violent incidents against LGBT individuals earlier this spring. I have heard from members of our Latino community who fear being targeted based on their perceived immigration status. And, nationally, the Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted dramatically the need to rebuild trust between law enforcement and communities of color. As mayor, I will ensure that HPD partners with local community members to develop and implement training programs that address the specific needs and concerns of these communities.

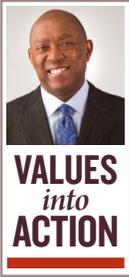
■ **DE-ESCALATION TRAINING.** The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing notes that “law enforcement culture should embrace a guardian — rather

than a warrior — mindset to build trust and legitimacy both within agencies and with the public.”⁵ To that end, the Task Force recommends that law enforcement officers undergo training in how to de-escalate a conflict with a member of the public. As mayor, I will ensure that effective de-escalation procedures are in place to protect the safety of both officers and the public.

■ **PUBLIC INPUT.** Truly effective community policing models provide regular opportunities for the public to voice their



“OUR NEIGHBORHOODS ARE SAFEST WHEN OUR POLICE OFFICERS ARE TRULY CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.”



concerns and, importantly, to influence department policy. As mayor, I will work with HPD and members of the community to build a system that gives every Houston resident access to the police. Such a system must be convenient and user-friendly, with a combination of digital access points and regularly scheduled, in-person meetings. Such a system must also accommodate non-English speakers, residents with limited mobility, residents with limited access to transportation, and others who might otherwise find it difficult to share their input. Community policing requires that citizens' voices are heard by the police, and that their input is put to substantive use.

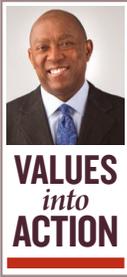
"I WILL FIGHT TO ENSURE WE HAVE ENOUGH OFFICERS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF TODAY'S HOUSTON."

- **POLICY AND DATA TRANSPARENCY.** Transparency is critical to building trust between the police and the communities they serve. It is also a commonsense way to ensure accountability and basic good governance. HPD has demonstrated a commitment to transparency, from programs like its Citizens Police Academy to working with the city's Independent Police Oversight Board to making a substantial amount of crime data available on its website.⁶ As a simple additional step, I will work to ensure that all HPD policies are easily accessible online for public review.⁷ I will also work with HPD to make regularly updated information about stops, arrests, and other relevant data, aggregated by demographics, available online.⁸
- **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT.** Reducing social distance between police and our young people is a long-term solution for safer neighborhoods and stronger communities. HPD's Teen and Police Service Academy⁹ — or TAPS Academy — is a strong model for increasing engagement between officers and youth. The research-based program partners selected youth with officer

mentors to discuss life-skills topics including bullying and conflict management. The TAPS Academy forges lasting relationships between young people and officers, sowing the seeds for safer communities. The presence of TAPS Academy officers in participating schools also enhances school safety. This program can serve as a blueprint for creating great relationships between youth and law enforcement officers across Houston. As mayor, I will bring together HPD, HISD and our other local school districts, and Harris County law enforcement to implement a citywide mentorship program in our schools.

- **OFFICERS AS NEIGHBORS.** There is no higher level of engagement between officers and communities than when officers live in the neighborhoods they serve. Unfortunately, fewer than half of HPD's officers live within Houston's city limits, and this geographic distance contributes to a lack of connection between the police and Houston's residents.¹⁰ The City of Houston has taken a recent step toward addressing this disparity by working with HPD to provide officers with a bonus to live in designated communities.¹¹ But this issue is too large for the city — especially given its budget constraints — to resolve alone. As mayor, I will





bring together representatives of Houston’s realtor community, the Houston Apartment Association and other members of our business community to develop a program of incentives to encourage law-enforcement officers to move into the communities they serve. For example, program models exist for providing downpayment and closing assistance to law-enforcement officers in designated neighborhoods in exchange for a several-year commitment to live in the neighborhood.¹² This issue provides an opportunity for our public and private sectors to work together to build a solution for the good of Houston.

Fully fund and effectively implement the proposed body camera program to ensure transparency in police interactions with the public.

Over the past few years, police departments across the country have begun equipping their officers with body cameras. This innovative technology has benefits including enhanced transparency and legitimacy, improved behavior of both citizens and officers, quicker resolution of citizen complaints, improved evidence for arrest and prosecution and the potential use of real-life recorded scenarios for subsequent training opportunities.

Body cameras have been shown to de-escalate police encounters with members of the public. A study done in 2013¹³ reported two findings that linked a reduction in the use of force to the presence of body-worn cameras:

1. “Shifts without cameras experienced twice as many incidents of use of force as shifts with cameras.”
2. Qualitative review of all use-of-

force incidents determined that officers without cameras were more likely to use force without been physically threatened. This occurred in five of the seventeen use-of-force incidents involving officers without cameras.

Body cameras also facilitate a quick resolution of complaints against officers, thereby saving valuable city resources. Because interactions between police and citizens so often take place in the absence of third-party witnesses, citizen complaints against police are often adjudicated as “not sustained.” Video evidence changes this dynamic and provides the evidence needed to resolve citizens’ complaints and lawsuits,¹⁴ benefitting both police and the public.

Police departments across the state have already employed body cameras and more have plans to implement them in the near future. HPD has been piloting the use of body cameras since 2013, and the pilot has proven successful.¹⁵ Last year, HPD requested \$8 million to fund a full-scale body camera program. Houston City Council has approved \$2.8 million in

funding toward that request.

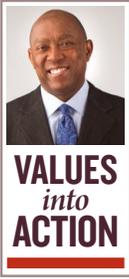
The Harris County District Attorney separately established a plan to purchase \$1.9 million in camera equipment, some of which will benefit HPD.

That still leaves this important initiative only half-funded and in need of additional resources from outside partners. During the most recent legislative session, I supported a bill that will provide approximately \$10 million in grant funding for Texas law enforcement agencies to establish local body camera programs.¹⁶ As mayor, I will commit to fully funding HPD’s body camera implementation.

But purchasing the equipment is only part of the solution. A

“SAFETY IS A PARTNERSHIP.”





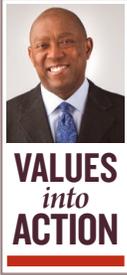
body camera program is ineffective without proper training and policies to ensure the cameras are used fairly and effectively. Policies about when or whether cameras can be turned off or how much notice private citizens have that they are being recorded will be critical to the program's overall success.¹⁷ As mayor, I will ensure the development of clear use guidelines so that body cameras are truly protecting Houstonians.

Build voter support for lifting the revenue cap for the specific purpose of increasing our officer pool to 6,000.

Our revenue cap has been in place for a decade, and it is no longer serving our city the way we once intended. Our growing population is demanding more and better services, yet available revenue to fund those services is capped by a decade-old charter amendment. The cap, which limits our revenue growth according to a formula based

on our population growth and inflation, is anticipated to contribute to a \$126 million city deficit next year.¹⁸ It is also plainly constraining our public safety efforts, as evidenced by HPD's chronic understaffing. The staffing acceleration plan that I propose to adopt would cost the city an estimated \$85 million over five years.¹⁹ Even by implementing cost-saving measures such as combining the city's crime lab operations with those of Harris County or DPS and civilianizing certain HPD functions, Houston cannot meet that need under the current revenue cap.

With the recent downgrading of Houston's debt outlook by Moody's, the leading rating agency, a consensus is building that a serious change is needed. However, lifting the revenue cap, even for limited purposes, is a decision for the Houston voters. City leaders have a responsibility to put the question to voters based on solid data, accompanied by a clear, finite plan for the use of the generated revenue. As mayor, I will work with City Council and HPD to develop a responsible strategy for increasing HPD staffing to 6,000 officers by 2020, and I will work to build public support for the plan.



Endnotes

¹ Houston Police Department Operational Staffing Model, Police Executive Research Forum and Justex Systems, Inc., May 2014, found at https://www.houstontx.gov/hpd_staffing_report-2014may.pdf.

² See “Chief: HPD can’t investigate every crime and should not try,” *Houston Chronicle*, June 5, 2014, found at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/houston/article/Chief-HPD-can-t-investigate-every-crime-and-5532263.php>

³ “Proposed Operational Staffing Enhancements for the Houston Police Department,” October, 2014, found at http://www.houstontx.gov/police/departments_reports/operational_staffing/Staffing-Recommendations-for-the-HPD-Final.pdf.

⁴ See, e.g., <http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/what-works-in-policing/research-evidence-review/community-policing/>.

⁵ Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, May 2015, http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce_FinalReport.pdf, p. 1.

⁶ <http://mycity.houstontx.gov/recentcrime/index.html>.

⁷ President’s Task Force, p. 13.

⁸ Id.

⁹ See www.tapsacademy.org.

¹⁰ See “City would pay officers to live in areas with frequent calls for service,” *Houston Chronicle*, July 28, 2015, found at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/houston/article/City-would-pay-officers-to-live-in-high-crime-6408898.php>.

¹¹ Id.

¹² See <http://www.houstontx.gov/housing/goodneighbor.html>.

¹³ Self-awareness to Being Watched and Socially-Desirable Behavior: A Field Experiment on the Effect of Body-Worn Cameras on Police Use-of-Force, Police Foundation, March 2013, found at <http://www.policefoundation.org/sites/g/files/g798246/t/201303/The%20Effect%20of%20Body-Worn%20Cameras%20on%20Police%20Use-of-Force.pdf>.

¹⁴ <https://ojpdiagnosticcenter.org/sites/default/files/spotlight/download/Police%20Officer%20Body-Worn%20Cameras.pdf>

¹⁵ “Report: Houston officers call body cameras a positive experience,” *Houston Chronicle*, May 24, 2015, found at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Report-Houston-officers-call-body-cameras-a-6284653.php>.

¹⁶ SB 158, signed into law June 19, 2015, effective September 1, 2015.

¹⁷ For example, Houston officers and community groups have both raised concerns over who will be responsible for downloading recorded video. Establishing appropriate procedures for such issues is essential to the credibility and effectiveness of a body camera program.

¹⁸ See “Amid mounting budget concerns, Parker plans to push for revenue cap change,” *Houston Chronicle*, July 12, 2015, found at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Amid-mounting-budget-concerns-Parker-plans-to-6380728.php?t=791648eb3555ac21b0&cmpid=twitter-premium>.

¹⁹ Operational Staffing, p. 77-82.